



Anglican Catholic Church



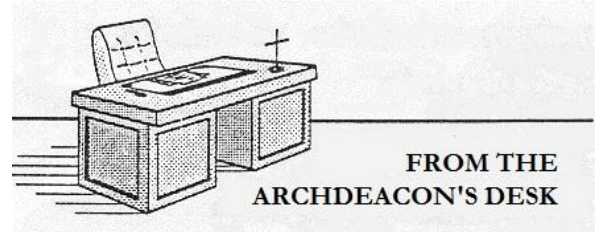
Diocese of the United Kingdom

Catholic Faith † Orthodox Worship † Apostolic Order

June 2017

*My dear friends and colleagues,*

The recent challenges our Bishop and his congregation have faced regarding the acquisition of the new chapel for St Augustine's parish brings certain things into perspective. There's no doubt it is a distinct advantage if we have learned the art of dealing with disappointments when they inevitably come along. In the ACC-DUK we certainly have our share of them.



Perhaps it wouldn't be good for us if everything always went smoothly. There would be nothing to test our determination. But life has its chapter of disappointments for most of us. Our plans go awry. Our hopes get deflated. The great thing is to avoid being beaten – and that's where we come in. We have a part to play in that, and everything depends on what sort of part we choose.

Isn't it true that when they are confronted with disappointment, some folks show their best side, while others show their worst? We've all known people who are fine as long as things were running well. But those same people were deflated and demoralised as soon as things went wrong. They just couldn't handle it, and they blamed others.

That's something we all need to watch in ourselves – the habit of blaming others when things don't go the way we want them to. People don't easily turn the spotlight of criticism upon themselves. They may search around for someone to blame when a situation goes from good to bad, and there are those who find relief, and even pleasure, when they have discovered a convenient scapegoat on whom the blame can be loaded.

Then there are those who, when things take a turn in the wrong direction, wrap themselves in self-pity and start blaming life for being so unkind to them. They look for a sympathetic ear, and then pour into it the tale of their woes. They tell you about their own undeserved sufferings to persuade you that they are the innocent victims of life's cruelty. Sometimes they become bitter about God and accuse Him of deserting and forgetting them. While we don't want to lose our sympathy for those who are on the losing side, we know in our hearts that this is not an example we ought to follow.

The great thing is to be able to face up to disappointments and take them without buckling. Don't blame others for them. Don't blame life. Don't get bitter with and about God. (And actually there's no special need to blame yourself.) Just face up to your disappointments and try again, trusting in God to guide you along the best path. Be in no doubt that a life with its ups and downs, and its rough and tumble, is a better training ground than a life in which we could get all we want on the easiest terms.

Of course, there are plenty of cases where we are moved to sympathy and even tears because the misfortunes of life have fallen terribly on some people, but you will notice that it's not those people who do the most complaining. Their courage often shames us, and it ought to be an inspiration as well. Let us learn from them that it isn't what life gives or what life withholds which matters – but the way in which we deal with challenging and changing circumstances.

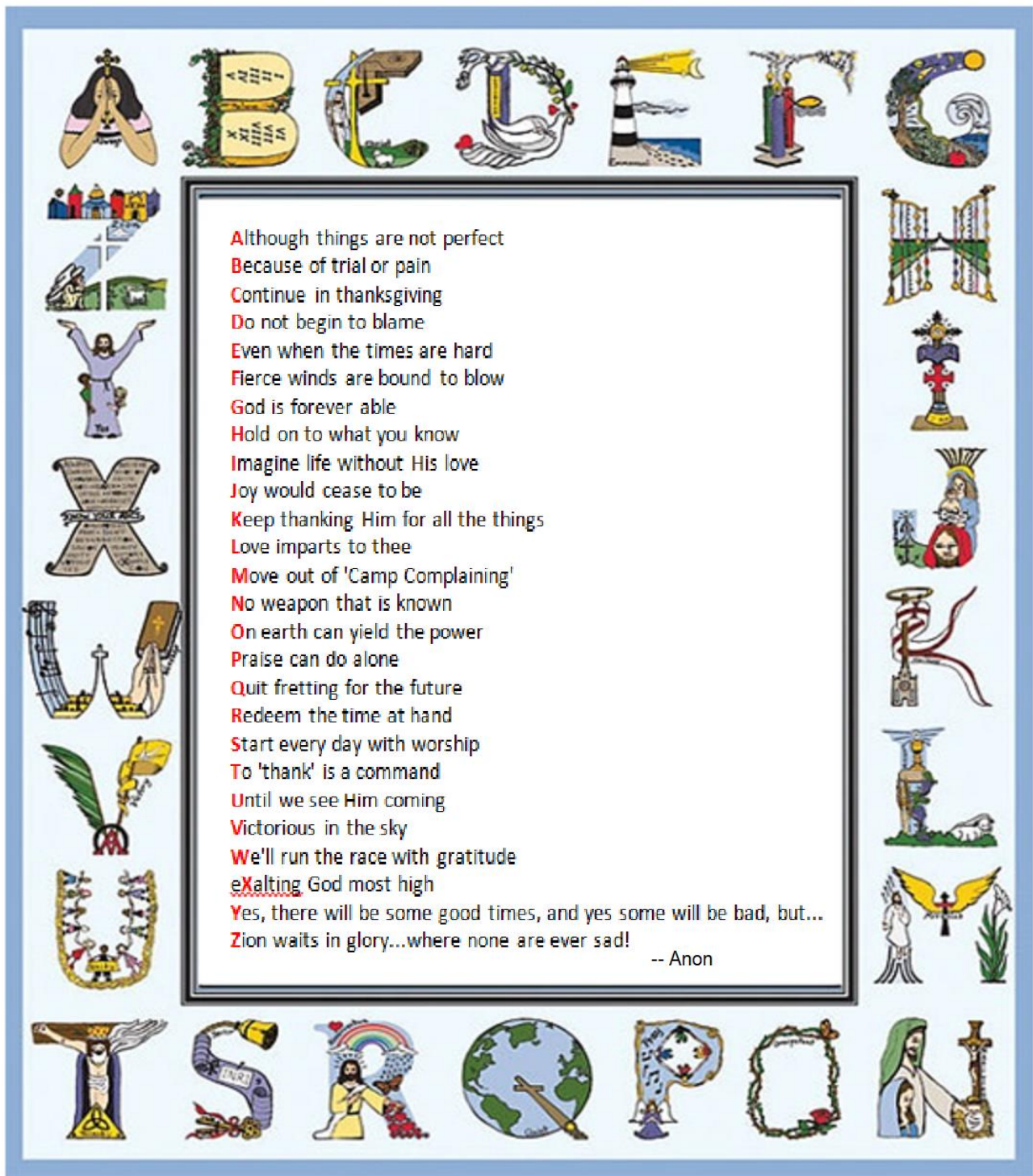
With every blessing

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Is the Bible any longer useful as a guide? From the Christian point of view, yes, its usefulness can be shown in every part of life. It is the word of God, and so does not become out of date as though its teachings were limited by time. The Bible, said Thomas Huxley, has been the Magna Carta of the poor and oppressed. This is true not merely because it teaches social justice, and maintains the universal rights of mankind, but because it bases this on the value of every individual soul to God. In the Bible, God speaks to mankind. Those who read it prayerfully may rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help them to a right understanding of its message. In no other book is there to be found a *divine* assurance of God's mercy and love, nor *divine* comfort for those who are bereaved. David Livingstone discovered the companionship of the Bible in his utter loneliness in the African Forest, and whilst there he read it through four times. It is a book on which an ideal home may be established, by who's teaching human love may reach its noblest fulfilment, in which we may find the promises made to each of us, directly, by God himself. Through it we may discover Truth. But above all it is the inspired *work* and *word* of God, and it alone has the good news of salvation.